ABOUR

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#### SITUATIONS VACANT

ROMFORD C.L.P.—Applications are invited for the post of Full-time Secretary-Agent. Salary and conditions in accordance with National Agreement. Application forms from Mr. F. W. Morris, 79 Market Place, Romford, Essex, to whom they should be returned not later than March 31st, 1949.

GILLINGHAM C.L.P. — Applications are invited for the post of Full-time Agent. Salary and conditions in accordance with the National Agreement. Application forms can be obtained from Mr. G. E. Meaton, Secretary, Gillingham C.L.P., Labour Hall, Relmont Road, Gillingham, Kent, and should be returned not later than 19th March, 1949.

LEICESTER C.L.P. require two Assistant Organisers to work under a group agency scheme (young applicants preferred). Appointments to be made in accordance with the terms of the National Agreement. Application forms may be obtained from C. V. Woods, 29 New Walk Leicester, to whom they must be returned not later than March 22nd, 1949.

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A SOUTH COAST CONSITTUENCY with active Labour Party and live Candidate require keen Female Secretary to assist in administration and organisation of Party. Replies to Dr. Skyrme, 12 Wellington Place, Hastings, Sussex.

CLITHEROE, C.L.P. invite applications for the post of Secretary-Agent. One with own car an advantage. Salary and conditions in accordance with National Agreement, plus generous car allowance. Application forms obtainable from the Secretary, Labour Hall, 100 Blackburn Road, Great Harwood, near Blackburn, Lancs., and must be returned not later than 15th March. 1949. marked "Agent,"

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BRIERLEY HILL C.L.P. Applications are invited for the post of Secretary-Agent. Salary and conditions in accordance with National Agreement. Application forms from Mr. W. V. Bradley, Llitie Wick, Penzer Street, Kingswinford, Staffs., to whom they must be returned not later than 28th March, 1949.

To be well informed you must read . . . .

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# The Labour Organiser

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## Youth and the Party

ABOUR'S fortunes in the spring elections, and even more in the 1950 campaign, will inevitably be influenced by our ability to put in the field a vanguard of fighting Socialist youth. So it is welcome news that the organisational framework is now set for a rapid growth in the strength and numbers of our League of Youth.

The number of branches has already nearly doubled since Scarborough, but a much more rapid advance must now be achieved if the 1950 target of 100,000 is to be reached and if the future of democratic Socialism is to be assured in the hands of Labour's youth.

Starting in June, a National Recruiting Campaign will be launched, first of all in the large industrial centres where front-rank speakers will address League rallies and up to 250,000 copies of a Youth Broadsheet will be distributed.

Such a mass canvass is something never before attempted on like scale for the League of Youth, and with an all-out effort there is every reason to expect that the Mass Rally at Filey in September will crown a successful and rewarding campaign.

## Beware the Grumblers

GRUMBLERS and grizzlers was the description recently given to our Tory opponents by Herbert Morrison. Rather than advancing positive policies, he said, their propaganda was wild, hysterical, negative and irresponsible. As Dr. J. A. Russell points out in his article on page 8 we have strong assets with which to fight the insidious line of Tory propaganda because we are fighting a great crusade based on a constructive and progressive policy. But it behoves us to be constantly on our guard against the scarifying and "red herring" tactics likely to be pursued by our opponents, and to ensure the widest distribution of sane, factual literature.

## New Life in a Rural Constituency

By DOUGLAS GARNETT, Secretary-Agent, Cirencester and Tewkesbury

JANUARY, 1947, a small band of enthusiasts striving to further the Socialist cause, with little knowledge of Party organisation, £200 in hand with an income from members' subscriptions of £20 per year supplemented only by small grants from the half a dozen local Labour Parties existing at that time.

January, 1949, a vigorous Party exists, a force to be reckoned with, well respected in Labour and Tory circles alike. A Party with an income last year of £1,400, well able to maintain an agent and in addition all the ever-increasing propaganda.

Our biggest problem has been how to bind all the various Parties scattered over a very wide area (366,000 acres), into one fighting machine. During the two-year period, the number of Local Parties has increased to 22. To achieve this we have had to work very closely with branches of the National Union of Agricultural Workers, and all praise is due to the County Organiser and the numerous branch secretaries for the help rendered. We have had failures as well as successes. Many a time a meeting called to form a Party has failed to materialise and the project in that village has had to be abandoned. The great thing is that we have refused to be disheartened—undeterred we have pressed on to new successes.

#### New Spirit Abroad

The feeling has changed here; a new spirit is abroad. Even our own supporters were confident at first that the Parliamentary seat held by the Tories with a majority of 7,000, could never be won. To-day they are convinced that victory can be ours. If the pressure can be kept up, victory will be within the grasp of those stout-hearted comrades in the Cirencester and Tewkesbury Division.

How was it possible to co-ordinate all the scattered Parties? The answer is quite simple—mobilise all your forces from time to time in conjunction with special efforts, mass demonstrations, bazaars, a summer rally and fete. We have organised all these with success and given our members and supporters that additional fillip that was required. Take as an example our

Summer Rally last July when twenty busloads arranged by Local Parties and N.U.A.W. branches, were brought to Cirencester on the great day. Three hundred marched through the streets carrying banners, with a band at the head of the procession. All Cirencester was 'agog' at this show of strength by the Party. 2,000 programmes at 18. each were sold before the day and £250 taken at the fete itself.

This was possible only because we made up our minds that the show could not fail; we put our backs into it and no effort was spared. And we were amply rewarded with the triumph that

followed.

To Parties fighting a similar battle to our own in Rural Britain, we would say, follow Cirencester and Tewkesbury's example. If you have a prospective candidate, use him to the fullest advantage. He can help in breaking new ground, in the forming of new Parties, in a thousand and one other ways. A letter from your candidate makes just the extra difference for by making himself known, he can become a "name" in every working class household throughout your division.

#### How the Money is Raised

Many may ask where did the money come from to maintain the agent and the organisation? In the same way as we used our resources, in Party members and sympathisers to ensure the success of special efforts, we used them to gather in the finances and secure financial stability. Up to a few months ago we had relied upon draws, bazaars, etc., organised by the Divisional Party together with donations from Local Parties. Whilst this method somehow kept our heads above water, it was always touch and go whether the Party could afford to maintain an agent. We have now had to resort to the scheme of selling weekly tickets and this regular weekly income has guaranteed the agent's salary and expenses for the past four months.

Divisional meetings have always presented a problem because of the geographical nature of the Division. The obvious meeting place has been Cheltenham, this constituency now being completely surrounded by our own.

Two years ago a body styling itself the Executive Committee met each month. though in fact any single member of the Party could attend this meeting and its size fluctuated from half a dozen to perhaps thirty members. The first perhaps thirty members. The first task was to prepare a set of rules so that a properly constituted E.C. could be elected from the A.G.M. of delegates from the various Parties and Trade Union branches. Since that time we have not looked back. A General Committee meeting held every quarter (the E.C. meets on two months out of three) consists of an attendance of 60 or more delegates and when one remembers delegates and when one remembers that many of these travel twenty or more miles to attend, this can be regarded as a very satisfactory figure. Recently a social evening to follow the meeting was arranged so that our widely scattered membership can be brought together.

#### **Educating Our Membership**

Having solved some of our immediate problems we are now turning to the task of making our membership an enlightened one and with our eye to both Local and Parliamentary elections, residential week-end schools are being held, covering such subjects as Local Government, Chairmanship and Public Speaking, Organisation and Elections. Whilst we do not expect striking results in the Local Elections (for a variety of reasons we are unable to obtain suitable candidates in sufficient numbers) a number of seats will be contested for the first time.

So one might go on with the story. Much, of course, remains to be done. Ours may not have been a spectacular effort, but membership has increased from a consolidated figure of around 250 to a little under 1,000. It has been steady progress and our rural friends will no doubt agree that the country-side which has been Tory for genera-tions cannot be conquered in five minutes.

Our great secret has been that despite the "Fuel Crisis," "Economic Crisis," "Lynskey Tribunal," cuts in rations and numerous Tory scares, we have gone steadily forward, proud of the Lynburg Covernment record of the Labour Government (reserving the right to criticise constructively within the Party certain aspects of policy), never being forced on the defensive but preaching the gospel of Socialism continuously.

Ours is a united Party-agent, candidate, officers, rank-and-file members, all comrades in the great struggle for Socialism. We have recaptured the old pioneering spirit and march steadily forward together. Persistence has been our watchword, that persistence which before many years have passed, may take the Cirencester and Tewkesbury Party to victory at a Parliamentary Election. It is a victory which they have well earned and richly deserve.

## Leagues Prepare for Filey

THERE is welcome news that Leagues of Youth in all parts of the country are already starting to save for September's National Rally at Filey. Thousands of collecting cards have gone out from headquarters and up and down the country Parties are awarding scholarships to encourage their young members to attend. Some trade unions are doing the same and there is no doubt that Labour's younger generation is responding well to this historic event.

Coming as the climax to a membership drive to be launched this June in our great industrial centres, Filey should certainly prove an outstanding milestone in League history.

Not only will these 6,000 young

politicians coming from all corners of Britain make many new friends among themselves, but they will meet other young Socialists who are travelling from the Continent to strengthen the bonds of International Socialist Youth. Denmark is sending a contingent numbering about 100, and among others, the French are expected to be well represented.

The week's highlight will be the final of the National Public Speaking Contest, the preliminary rounds of which are now being run, and for which the Daily Herald is awarding a trophy and other prizes. And, of course, every source of entertainment in this luxury holiday camp will be available for the inclusive fee of £5 for the week.

## Our Great Army of Volunteers

By A. L. WILLIAMS, Assistant National Agent

MR. MOXLEY'S article in February's Labour Organiser no doubt was meant to be a clarion call to the Labour Party to prepare itself, spiritually and physically, for the decisive battle of 1950.

It is indeed fortunate that it will not be taken seriously, for if it were, it would be more likely to cause alarm and despondency, than to arouse the fighting spirit of socialists.

It seems to Mr. Moxley "that to-day we have a Party in which many of the leaders and officials are unwilling to work hard unless there is the prospect of payment. Fees, expenses and even salaries are demanded as a prerequisite to effort."

What arrant nonsense and what a stupid libel on the active workers of the Party.

#### Party Organisation

There are fewer than 250 full-time agents employed by the Labour Party to-day. Yet there are 613 Constituency Labour Parties, 6,000 Local Labour Parties, not to speak of Central Labour Parties, Federations, Ward Committees, Women's Sections and Leagues of Youth.

Even the "notable exceptions" to the general tendency not to work hard without pay, admitted by Mr. Moxley, cannot account for the continued existence and activity of this multitude of Party organisations.

#### **IDEA FOR EDITORS**

The contents panel now appearing on the front page of the Surrey "County Clarion" is proving highly successful and is an idea which may appeal to the editors of many other local journals.

A small panel is set aside on the front page each month and contains a description of the many local items giving the page and column on which they are to be found. Easy reference to "what you want to read" is thereby provided.

The simple truth is that the modern Labour Party has a greater army of volunteers, giving long hours of service to the socialist cause, than ever it had in the past, and the self-sacrificing work of the Labour rank-and-file always has been the envy of its opponents.

If selfish people join the Labour Party for financial gain they are soon disillusioned. But in any case, what is wrong in meeting expenses incurred on Party work, or even in paying a salary, if the Party can afford it?

It is asking too much of voluntary workers to do the work and to meet the expenses as well. Many do, of course, but they should not be expected to do so.

There is nothing immoral in paying an official a salary. Trained officials, devoting their whole time to planning and organising, can make the voluntary efforts of others many times more effective.

We can never hope to equal the financial resources of our opponents and must continue to depend in the main on the unpaid enthusiast. And everyone will agree with Mr. Moxley that there is need for greater effort and for a tightening up of our organisation.

#### An Unhappy Obsession

But those with any experience of Party work will reject out of hand his ideas of how to bring about the desired improvement. He is obsessed with the conception of a disciplined Party of activists. He would not accept members unless they were pledged to work, and he would dismiss those who failed to carry out their allotted tasks.

It was this issue that split the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party into the rival factions of Bolshevik and Menshevik.

The Bolshevik conception of political organisation is completely alien to the British tradition. Both the I.L.P. and the Fabians in this country strove to win over mass organisations, and the success of this policy is to be seen to-day in the great Labour Party and the majority Labour Government.

The Party needs many new members and, even more, it needs more active members. The inactive cannot he made active by threats of expulsion.

Any self-respecting individual would "cock a snook" at the Party Committee which ordered him to do work he was not already willing to undertake.

Just as we have to persuade the elec-tors to vote for our Candidates so we have to persuade our members to become active in the Party. Many local organisations are short of workers just because they have never asked their inactive members to help.

The approach to the membership should be friendly and reasonable. Not all members are in a position to be very active. Some fail because they are enlisted for jobs they are not suited

for. Others would undertake work if

for. Others would undertake work in some elementary training were given. Because a member may not be willing to go canvassing it does not mean that he is useless. It is possible that he will do a writing job in the committee room, or even in his own home. Even if he will only display a window will at alection times his help is worth bill at election times his help is worth

If we doubled our present individual membership, it is a safe bet that we should double our active membership too. If we made a real effort to draw into active Party life the inactive members and provide some elementary training we shall be infinitely stronger

than we are to-day.

This is the approach that will bring results and not the pseudo Bolshevik approach advocated by Mr. Moxley.

We cannot afford to reject members—we need both quality AND quantity

## Go Ahead with Membership Campaigns

By VIC CLARK, Membership Secretary, Finchley and Friern Barnet L.P.

I WAS very interested in February Moxley's article in February Labour Organiser, "Let us Organise for Victory." May I refresh readers' with some of his sugges-WAS very interested in Frank

"Every new member should be accepted on the understanding that he or she will be active. The Party should reject all others." "It is better to disband a small Party than for it to be wrongly led." "Penalty of loss of membership should be imposed." "Bands of workers should be out several times a week." Frank Moxley states: "What an ideal!" That is exactly what it is-just an ideal! And, if I may say so, far removed from practical politics and rank-and-file realities.

Membership would tumble very heavily if these academic suggestions were adhered to. We just cannot afford to reject members in this way - we need both quality quantity.

Apparent inactive members assist in devious ways with finance, social support, propaganda amongst family and friends, shops and bus queues, offices and workshops. They provide a pool of potential help and increased voting power.

I am the Membership Secretary of Friern Barnet Labour Party. During Friern Barnet Labour Party. During the past three years, membership has increased from 300 to 700 and to 1,100 in a predominantly Tory dormitory district. Our target now is 2,000 and we mean to get them. Friern Barnet Party, chalked up one of the few Labour gains in last year's U.D.C. elections, and the Labour vote increased in all wards.

New members have been initially circularised with Information Bulletins advertising current literature, inviting them to meetings, discussions and social functions whenever they have time and tactfully appealing for an hour's help now and again to canvass, collect subscriptions and distribute notices. Frank Moxley's firm demand, from out of the clouds, for bands of workers several times a week would, I feel sure, provoke apathy in many areas.

It's bread-and-butter politics Friern Barnet and it works! I do appeal to other Parties to go ahead with membership campaigns spread their wings over all types and sections of the community.

Extensive membership is vital to our

cause.

## **Election "Red Herrings"**

By Dr. J. A. RUSSELL, Secretary, Galloway, C.L.P.

Here is a warning to the unwary of the tactics likely to be pursued by our Tory opponents as their campaign gets under way

THE big fight is now on. There is no mistaking the signs. Preparations for the combat are rapidly getting under way in both camps.

On the Tory side there is the huge election fund built up by Lord Woolton for the running of his propaganda machine; and though we may seek to question the source and manner of its accumulation, it is not at all likely to deter these "last ditchers" from their all-out drive to recover from the humiliation of losing power—and with it "caste" or "face"—in 1945.

The opponents of Labour's policy are in deadly earnest; as far as organisation as such, divorced from policy and aim, they will leave no stone unturned to turn the election tables. For them it is a case of a last chance. Defeated next year they fall, most likely never to rise again as serious challengers to the forces of progress and reform. Hence we can expect a conflict of deadly venom, with novel "red herring," absurd canards, impossible bogeys, trotted out as their otherwise quite negative case against Socialism lengthens; on the other hand, it is very likely that we shall have some new, analogous "Zinoviev letter" scare sprung on us at the last minute-the old dodge of taking the electors by surprise, refusing them time to think or to query.

#### A Foretaste

Already in the division for which I act as secretary, I have a foretaste of what to expect by way of tactics and general, vituperative denunciation. It is enough to be a Socialist to be denounced for folly and incompetence. Every Labourite is misled; he is also 'doctrinaire" — seemingly this is an almost final gibe and reproach, although I do not fancy it affects us one iota. In this constituency, a feudal and backward area, the Tories are well in funds and in the local Press, wholly favourable to their cause and personnel, they publish (at ordinary advertisement rate, I under-

stand) a prominent double-column "News-Letter."

In the latest to appear, reference is made to 1949 as "a year of opportu-nity," after which the anonymous writer goes on to a piece of real wish-ful thinking. He, she, it (or them) says: "Before the year ends we may find ourselves fighting one of the bitterest and most important elections of modern times." The time indicated here is decidedly naïve, for the Tories have been hoping for the same sort of happening each year of their "dispora." I hardly think they are likely to be favoured with the necessary concatenation of circumstances this year; 1950 will be quite time enough for us—and for them, too, no doubt, when the big day arrives. However, fight they must, or pretend to do that, for at the backs of many of their stubborn minds is doubt, that thought, openly expressed by Mr. MacNair Snadden, that this is perhaps the last election their party may ever fight.

#### Big Campaigns

What, then, are we doing on our side? We are, of course, far from idle. Never, indeed, has so much literature poured out from H.Q., to the momentary harassment of, at least, amateur organisers. First there are the big campaigns being organised for the local elections — Scotland's key city, Glasgow, having a platform team headed by no less a personage than Mr. Herbert Morrison. In Edinburgh, again, the Scottish Council of the Labour Party is staging a week-end conference, with speakers of the calibre of Mr. Arthur Woodburn and his assisting secretaries and the permanent officials of the party. With this inspiring national lead we should all be getting our loins girt up, metaphorically, for the campaigns in store in our own local sphere.

#### First Shots

Only last week I had occasion to assist in firing our first shots in the

uncient and royal burgh of Wigtown. My task was to speak on "Organisation," not on the surface at all an inspiring subject, but one rather to dismay and intimidate.

Realising this, I did not seek to plunge right in academically, to the almost certain boredom of the audience, but poked fun at the Tory idea of organisation; that is, from the top, with afternoon meetings when only one narrow class of society can attend. Large membership, no doubt—but largely nominal, window-dressing—annual subscription of halfacrown, even free car-rides to meetings, anything to get you roped in. Likewise numerous branches—of a kind. In the main, intended for fun and games, whist drives and dances not for the presentation of a serious election programme.

'And, in this connection, I thought the chairman made a good point in emphasising that the Tories have indeed a "policy"—let out of the bag, somewhat gauchely, by Sir John Anderson, when he spoke of the need for abolishing the food subsidies, cutting pensions, while, at the same time, lengthening the hours of work. That, of course, is the "policy"; of such barefaced beggarliness that it surely cannot possibly succeed.

#### Strong Assets

To fight this insidious line of propaganda we can rest assured that we have strong assets. Organisation must be strong. That goes without saying. But it must have the willing consent of the "organised"; it must be from below equally as from above. Even numbers are not everything.

Our strength is in the conviction with which we cleave to our cause. It is this that makes our onward fight a crusade rather than a mere, bitter campaign, as the bigoted Tories so often view it on personal grounds—an encroachment on their hitherto sacred preserves.

Reprinted from the "Scottish Co-operator."

#### Round Our Locals

KEMSLEY and Beaverbrook must look to their laurels! Our "Felstead News" makes the bold claim that it "goes in more Felstead houses than any other publication." Sure it is only a small, duplicated journal produced by the Felstead (Essex) Local Party, but it has now been running for three years, and its bright and breezy commentary on local affairs and home-produced cartoons ensure that it is read with interest. It shows that hard work, enthusiasm and pluck still flourish.

The stream of new ventures flows steadily on. Yorkshire West Riding has three new journals—"Halifax Labour News," "Shipley Clarion" and "Sowerby Herald," while other areas have brought out "Abertillery Labour News," "North Staffs, Standard," and "West Norfolk Herald." These are all well-printed, well-produced newspapers, Less ambitious, but showing courage and brains are the duplicated sheets "Hayes Socialist" and "Dover Beacon."

Coatbridge is not one of the great centres of population, but it has discovered the knack—the lost art almost in these days—of making a paper pay. The "Coatbridge Labour Bulletin," which completes its second year this month, is handing over to the Local Party over £4 a month, and about £2 tos. to the ward sections.

#### DEADLINE

Don't forget the deadline for the receipt of all contributions — the 15th of the month for publication the following month.

the following month.

That applies to advertisements as well as articles. Send them all to The Editor, Labour Organiser, Transport House, Smith Square, S.W.I.

Let's hear what your Party is doing!



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# Coats off for the general election 5

# VICTORY THE H

WE shall need to take off more than our coats for the next General Election. We shall not win in 1950 unless we are prepared to lose a lot more sweat than we did in 1945.

Let me repeat in the "Labour Organiser" what I have said at scores of organisation conferences within the Party: Neither we nor the Tory Party fought the General Election of 1945 as hard as we fought in 1935.

Let me deal first with the Tory machine. The truth is that there was no Tory election machine in 1945. Tory candidates were nominated, of course; the war-time national leader made speeches; the election addresses were, with difficulty written up and handed to the Post Office but the Tories had no canvassing squads as we have known them at former elections. Tory Committee Rooms were relatively unmanned; fewer Tory cars than ever were on the job on polling-day and when they were apparent they were lined up outside Committee Rooms because there were few people able to tell them where to go.

#### Facts to be Faced

Unless everybody in the Labour Party recognises what I am saying to be true, and faces the fact that the conditions of 1945 will not be present in 1950, we shall fail, and fail miserably, at the next General Election. Let me illustrate what I am getting at by quoting from a 1945 Tory election address for a constituency which prior to 1945 could boast of the most efficient Tory Party election machine throughout the whole country. Here's the statement in bold print:

"We regret that at this election we shall not be able to visit you to ask for your support or make arrangements to take you by car to vote but we appeal to you to go to the polling station and

vote for ...

This was the "trust to luck" level to which the Tory machine had fallen in a division which had either been won or lost by the Tory or Labour Parties at previous elections according to which had the most effective organisation. In this same area to-day the Tory Party has some little way to go

## by J. T. Baxte

 Here is a challeng Midland Regional only be ours if we than we did in 19<sup>4</sup>
 And in this artic

to reach its pre-war standard of efficiency, but it is certainly getting near it

So the first thing we should all be very clear about is that the Tory Party will not muck through 1950 as it did 1945; it will fight! The question to be answered by all keen members of the Labour Party is whether they intend to work for victory in 1950 or whether they are just hoping that the miracle of 1945 will be repeated — a miracle because Labour's victory came without losing much sweat.

What is the rank-and-file member thinking to-day and anticipating in 1950? Did I get the key to this when

# D WAY IN 1950

I heard a member in a Party meeting say, "The Government has got to bring something out of the hat if we are going to win"? As a matter of fact it was only too obvious that he was going to leave the winning of the next General Election to the Government, 1945 had proved to him that Labour could win without too much pre-war foot-slogging on the doorsteps. He had

ishful thinkers by the East . Victory, he writes, will red to lose a lot more sweat

lains the reason why.

already decided who to blame if we lost votes!—This little man possesses more than a little significance in the Party at the moment; far too many are

thinking like him.

And what about those Members of Parliament who believe that in 1945 they won because of their superior brains and more attractive personalities? The chap who thinks that he won the election on the public platform? They are a danger to themselves but, much more important, they are a danger to the Party, Do you remember Polling-Day in 1945?

Do you remember the summerfrocked women pushing their prams and going to vote in the morning or afternoon before their husbands came home? It surely was a lovely day for the election agent with memories of previous elections. People didn't wait to be fetched by either Party despite the fact that none of them had been accustomed to voting for ten years. No, even M.P.s must realise that 1950 will not be a second edition of 1945. Many of them took quite a while to get over the shock of being elected. The point is, however, how many of them have now settled down like some of the rank and file to believe that history will, inevitably, repeat itself? How many M.P.s already feel that prewar electioneering is a bore and unnecessary? That they have only to appear as the Member of Parliament to be acclaimed?

#### Work on the Doorstep

My colleagues in previous articles have dealt admirably with some of the things we must do to win the next General Election. More detailed plans will, as time goes on, be outlined, but what is essential now is that we all have the right angle on the job—that only much more intensive work on the doorstep can see us to victory. 1945 was a soft job. 1950 will be the biggest job ever tackled. Our opponents will fight harder than they have ever fought and they know that the margin of votes between defeat and victory is excitingly slender.

#### On With the Fight

We must fight in the streets, on the doorsteps, in the homes, for the minds and hearts of the people. The final result will depend upon the way two or three in every street who voted Labour in 1945 decide to cast their votes next year. Between now and then minds will be made up. What is your Party doing about it?

## What Street Secretaries Should Do

IN considering some of the methods by which the ward organising secretary should attempt to build up an clectoral organisation in preparation for 1950, the group agreed with the need for efficient records stressed in the Organisation Handbook. It was felt that not only the central ward records but also those of collectors or existing street leaders should be standardised and that records should exist at these

lower levels.

Building up membership is a vital concern in the coming year but this should be combined with wider tasks of electoral organisation in wards before The household canvass of an area by planned effort during a given period (Handbook, page 29) seems to us wasteful of resources, and unless central control is extremely efficient no records of the overall position in the area are ever obtained. This kind of only in areas where Party strength is comparatively weak. With a whole year before us, the chain system of canvassing, suitably modified in the light of the needs of a ward party approaching a General Election should he adopted.

#### **Election Picture**

Increasing membership is important, but even more vital is the need to build up an overall situation picture so that the election campaign can be planned well in advance. The instrument to meet this need lies in a newly-defined function for the Street Leader. We suggest that the term "Street Secretary" would convey far better the work that this important official should be doing. His duties would include:-

(1) Establishing a register of Party members in the street or area with the necessary information about the work they are prepared to do, etc.

(2) Compiling a register of households, giving position vis-à-vis the Party (cross-referenced with register in (1) above).

(3) Canvassing continuously through 1949, slowly but methodically, so that a complete picture of the street situation is in hand by the end of the year. Two complete canvasses would be the ideal.

#### Literature will Help

(4) On all these canvasses, literature should be taken. Suitably-chosen literature may sometimes convince where the canvasser has failed. Though incidental to the primary object of the canvass, literature sales are important and will benefit Party funds.

(5) Passing on statistics, figures and information acquired, to the ward organising secretary for his central

ward records.

(6) Preparing canvass check-books for use in the election period by outside canvassers should a last-minute

canvass be decided upon.
(7) The ideal would be for street secretaries to replace collectors entirely, but where a widelyscattered membership and new street secretaries make this impossible, collectors would exist side by side with street secretaries and would attend the business meetings in the normal way,

Above all, it should be the job of the Street Secretary to know his street intimately and to extend Labour's strength in every possible way.

The groups feel confident that if Party members are given a definite but limited responsibility, under the street system, to canvass in their own time and in their own area, far more keenness will result and an experienced body of workers will slowly be built up. By spreading out the work, more effective canvassing should result than by the feverish efforts of a few willing volunteers.

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## **Our New Appointments**

TWENTY new agency appointments have been approved by the National Executive Committee. Many are young Party officers going to their first post as full-time agent; others are already well known among the ranks of Labour agents.

MR. F. C. REEVES, who now becomes full-time Secretary-Agent for Poole, has been a leading personality in the old East Dorset Division for 22 years both as part-time Secretary-Agent of the Party and as Secretary of the Poole Labour Club. He has taken a prominent part in the organisation of Labour Clubs in East Dorset which now have a membership of 3,000 with two new Clubs about to open and more planned. Indeed, he has helped with the establishment of Labour Clubs throughout the country. Mr. Reeves, who is 50, had control of Parliamentary elections in East Dorset in 1929, 1931, 1935 and 1945, and of all Borough Council elections in Poole since 1925.

MR. WILLIAM FISHER, already well-known to Gravesend where he was an untiring and efficient worker at the dramatic by-election in 1947, now becomes Gravesend's full-time agent. A Party member for 23 years, he has been part-time agent in Dover for 3½ years as well as working as a miner. In control of the General Election campaign in Dover, he was also sub-agent at Bexley and Croydon by-elections as well as Gravesend.

Mr. R. G. HAYWARD, who has been full-time agent at Banbury now moves to Rochester and Chatham. Aged 31, he has controlled local government elections in the Banbury Division during the past three years and was subagent at the recent Edmonton by-election. He holds Agents' Grade "A" Certificate.

#### For Divided Boroughs

Two appointments just made are for assistant organisers in divided boroughs. Mr. T. Chipchase, who goes to Newcastle City is a 49-year-old foundry foreman with considerable experience of Party work. Mr. Hugh Morgan, aged 33, who becomes assistant organiser for Birmingham Borough, has helped in the recent Gorbals and Stirling and Falkirk byelections. He was an assistant election

agent in 1945 and has had considerable experience of local government elections.

Other new appointments include those of Mr. T. Anderson, Secretary of Blaydon C.L.P., for three years, who becomes full-time agent for Bishop Auckland; Mr. Victor Steed, part-time agent for five years, who now becomes full-time agent for Wednesbury; Mr. Fred Cooke, Party member for 18 years who goes to Nelson and Colne; Mr. S. E. Spicer who goes to Winchester; Mr. J. C. Smith who goes to Leek; Mr. F. V. Saunders who goes to Stoke Central; and Mr. Peter Kelley, Labour Party member for 29 years who conducted General Election for Perth Party and now becomes full-time agent, for Leyton Borough.

#### Spotlight on Youth

Youth is well to the fore in these appointments. Mr. L. Griffiths, who is only 22, becomes full-time agent for Devizes; 23-year-old James Tye becomes full-time agent for Cleveland; and Mr. T. R. McMahon, aged 24, goes to Kingston. Mr. A. R. Jones who is 26 and has been Secretary of the Bedford Borough L.P. becomes full-time agent for St. Marylebone; Mr. R. E. Brewer, also 26, goes to Hornsey; and Mr. C. E. Shopland a one-time active member of the League of Youth who has helped in Parliamentary and local elections, goes to Warrington.

New full-time agent for Dulwich is Mr. W. Haxwood who has previously been agent at Stroud (Glos.) and Dartford; and Brixton's new agent is 29-year-old E. Allison who has held several offices in the Party.

# Do all your key workers read the LABOUR ORGANISER?

## Labour's "Northern Voice"

By FRANK MEADE, Hon. Manager

THE invitation to tell the story of the "Voice" is no easy assignment in the allotted space. Such a devil of a lot happens in twenty-four years. However, at the risk of being dull, let me give the bare bones of the story.

Labour's "Northern Voice" made its first appearance on May 1st, 1925, as the weekly organ of the I.L.P. No. 9 Division (Lancashire, Cheshire and N. Staffs, Area) describing itself as a "Working-Class Weekly for Working-Class Folk." A private limited liability company was formed but was later changed to a society registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act and so it remains to-day, with the shareholders electing the Management Committee and the Committee appointing the officers. The rules prohibit the payment of any dividend on share capital. Pure optimism that rule!

#### High Finance

The original capital of about £500 melted away like Tory seats at the last General Election and there soon sprang up what was known as the "Voice Development Committee," charged with the task of getting in the coppers.

It gathered together a grand group of comrades with whom it was a joy to work. Although I say "Committee," no one in fact ever got elected to it, and it very rarely sat in committee. Everybody had work to do and there was no time for mere talk.

It consisted of the comrades who came down to the office certain nights in the week, hail, snow or sunshine, did all the administrative work of the paper, developed a prosperous literature department, ran sweepstakes, raffles, jumble sales, sales of work, dances, dinners or socials—anything that was likely to raise some cash.

One Christmas draw landed the Directors, not the Committee, before the Stipendiary Magistrate in Manchester. As the chairman (Elijah Sandham) was a Member of Parliament we put him in the dock. Fines were imposed and technically I believe we were convicted under the law of being "Rogues and Vagabonds." I always

remember going to the office at the Police Court, paying the fines and then in my youthful ignorance asking for a receipt. "Your freedom is your receipt," I was told. I hoped the auditors would be satisfied.

We never spent money on anything but strict essentials. We paid our own bus fares and all our other incidental expenses. During the depression one unemployed member of the staff (now a full-time trade union official) used to come down to the office every day and I said I would insist on paying his fares as he could not afford the leather used walking to the office. We compromised. We bought him a bike from the Co-op. on the weekly (2/6), and cut the weekly postage and parcels bill by twice that much. "Robbing Peter to pay Paul" was brought to a fine art. If they were threatening to cut off the gas you paid up at the 59th minute and then lived in hopes that something would turn up to replace the money you borrowed to pay the gas or the rate. It was a great life. (If you didn't weaken.)

#### Development

When the war broke out and funds were very low it seemed that we were going to write "finis" at last. However, the unexpected "phoney war" stage helped us to adjust ourselves to the changed conditions—party politics dead but intense activity on the industrial side. By the time the bombs started dropping in Manchester we had got over the initial war difficulties and the bombs were a minor inconvenience as far as the paper was concerned. They even failed to hit the office. There was of course, a great deal of improvising but we managed somehow, steadily gaining ground, and eventually reached the stage when we could make out a cheque without first checking the bank balance to make sure there was enough in to cover it. That was a major achievement. Still we did not rush to ask the Corporation to put back the gas stoves which we had given up because we could neither afford their hire nor the gas they consumed. We used paraffin stoves and managed to pay cash for the paraffin.

About 1943 we found difficulty in accommodating all the news items, such as trades council reports, etc., which we were getting from all over the country. We could not increase the number of pages so I adopted the pet theory I had held for over twenty years of localised editions. During the period the "Voice" was a weekly I ran a Liverpool Edition for the Trades and Labour Council. I was always confident that the idea had a fair chance of success but I had to wait twenty years before I got it. The Tories thought of it a year ago.

#### Local Editions

First of all Blackpool Trades Council got a new Secretary, and Bill Giles was determined to put the Trades Council on the map. Bill soon realised the need for publicity and a Blackpool edition of the "Voice" was the answer to both our prayers. At first we just changed a couple of pages in the ordinary edition for Blackpool news. We began to learn to get over snags and before long we started the Southern edition on the same lines. Later we laughed at what we realised was a bit checky in publishing a SOUTHERN

edition of Labour's NORTHERN "Voice." We followed with a Stockport edition and then during the 1945 General Election we gained a little more experience by running special editions for some of the D.L.P.s.

The Wythenshawe edition made its appearance just after the election and since then it has been a matter of turning away custom. There was both a paper and production problem. We liked to consolidate a new issue before starting another one. At the moment Labour's Cornish "Voice" is the baby of the Labour Voice family, now numbering ten, and mighty proud are we of our baby. It won't be the baby much longer, though, because it is planned this month (March) should see the birth of the Newcastle-on-Tyne "Voice." The Labour's Voice family has many dialects but a very solid common bond—Socialism.

In conclusion may I say to those who are struggling to keep a local Labour paper going: Have a stout heart, every little success, however, temporary, will more than compensate for the disappointments—and you will certainly get plenty of them.









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## **Quotes from Agents' Notes**

A GENTS' reports for the six months ending December 31, 1948, are largely concerned with problems resulting from redistribution and preliminary plans for the local election cam-

paigns.

From Acton comes this story of intensive preparation: "The planning of Party work during the past four months has been directed towards preelection work to be carried out during the first three months of 1949. The "Stim" system has been enthusiastically adopted. Registers covering an electorate of just under 54,000 have been cut up, pasted on to Canvass Cards and the folders and boards for 22 Polling Districts have been pasted up. Wards are now transferring the known Labour Vote to these Canvass Cards, and also using any other information which they can obtain (knowledge of experienced members, etc.) to complete a Marked Register as far as possible.

#### Acton's New Headquarters

This Party, by the way, now has its own Headquarters, Faraday Hall, a pre-fab building completed on September 21, 1948. Put up by Party members and trade unionists, it consists of a meeting hall, holding 150 persons, Agent's office, kitchen and usual offices and is now let to affiliated organisations nearly every night of the week. At present there is a running loss of about £2 a week, but with afternoon lettings it is hoped that the hall will pay for itself.

Many reports comment on the smooth way in which re-organisation has been achieved. Wimbledon and Merton and Morden D.L.P.s comment on the basic preparation which enabled all the changes to go through without hitch or heartburn. Some problems there, of course, were. From Romford comes this comment:

"The position of the Brentwood Local Labour Party presents rather a different picture, and to some extent shows the fallacy of tacking a semi-rural area on to a dormitory Borough of London suburbia, where there is absolutely no community of interest and where two diverse populations in outlook are divided by six miles of green pasture."

Few sensational membership increases are reported. Indeed, many Parties seemed to have found it difficult enough to maintain their 1947 figures. Gorton D.L.P., commenting on its summer membership campaign, suggests "that it is easy enough to obtain new members . . . the difficulty is getting Collectors to keep them as regular paying members."

#### Finding the Collectors

Romford, too, with an individual membership around the 2,000 mark. has had considerable difficulty in maintaining sufficient collectors to cover its membership. So it has now been decided to centralise the organisation for the collection of subscriptions with only seven collectors operating directly under the Central Office and receiving a commission of 25 per cent. on their collections. First indications are that the scheme is proceeding satisfactorily and certainly gives the Central Office a better grip on the actual membership of the Party.

But the picture is far from universally gloomy. West Lewisham, with a membership over the 2,000 mark, records an increase despite the loss of Ladywell Ward and its 124 members through redistribution. Honor Oak Ward achieved the praiseworthy increase of 200 new members during the year. Ilford South reports an increase of 366 for the year; Skipton an increase of over 200.

A special tribute hould go to Newcastle (Staffs) D.L.P. which reports an increase in individual membership of 646—more than doubling the previous year's membership.

Wansbeck D.L.P. ended its life with an increase of 459 individual members in six months. Its membership of over 3,000 now pass into the five new Divisions of Newcastle (West), Blyth, Morpeth, Hexham and Tynemouth.

#### Literature Sales

The satisfactory sale of literature seems to provide a constant source of worry and dissatisfaction. There is the frequent reminder that finance governs the distribution of literature and only too often limits the scope of what can be done. Bosworth D.L.P.

comments: "The main difficulty at the moment is the distribution of literature, i.e., the sale of literature. We have overcome this by distributing it free." A temporary solution, perhaps, but hardly conducive to long-term financial prosperity.

Lincoln writes that "the financial position has mitigated against any large-scale distribution of literature and efforts to date have been extremely limited in scope," although a newlystarted duplicated monthly newspaper is doing good work in drawing members more closely together.

Again there is a cheering side to the picture. Battersea reports "Our literature sales have been good. We have distributed 10,000 copies monthly of the Citizen in South Battersea"-something which has quite upset local Tories. And from the Skipton Division comes the news that the distribution of literature" has proceeded on a scale far in excess of anything previously achieved except at general elections."

At Acton, an overhaul of the whole machinery for literature distribution with a special concession to Wards to order literature from the Divisional Literature Secretary on a sale or return basis, still failed to secure any apparent increase in sales. So, for the time being, the Agent has been given powers to order literature and organise its distribution. To secure an accurate picture of the progress of literature distribution, Hampstead D.L.P. includes space for a statement on its monthly At Acton, an overhaul of the whole space for a statement on its monthly ward report forms.

## Wansbeck Story

"TATRITTEN to commemorate the last annual conference of the Divisional Labour Party before the dissolution of the parliamentary constituency." Such is the sad epitaph which prefaces the attractive publication of the Wansbeck Divisional Labour Party to commemorate the outstanding events and personalities of the past thirty years.

It tells a chequered story with fortunes that ebbed and flowed from year to year. "There were times (like the present) when it was strong in membership and financially unassailable. There were others (as in the years following the 1926 stoppage) when its membership sank to the lowest level and funds were almost non-existent. There were times when expenditure exceeded income and there was no money to pay the organiser's salary. And there were other times when money was so plentiful that we could not only pay his salary in full but could provide him with a telephone, a typewriter and a duplicator and the party with a loud-speaker van."

The Wansbeck division was first constituted in 1885 when Charles Fenbecame the Northumberland miners' M.P. holding the seat as a Liberal-Labour Member for 33 years until his death on April 20, 1918. Labour member elected in 1945 was Alfred Robens, now Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Fuel and

Ever associated with Wansbeck Divisional Labour Party will be Dan Dawson, for 24 years agent, organiser and secretary, who saw the Party through the precarious days to a position of power and strength with a Labour Government at Westminster.

The great gathering of Party members held early in 1948 on the occasion of his retirement "demonstrated beyond any doubt the very high regard in which Dan was, and is, held throughout the division."

A portrait gallery of ten prominent Party leaders in Wansbeck over the past 30 years adds the final touch to a memorable booklet.

## **Our Get-Togethers**

The success of our membership campaign (where the final gain was 545 in four months) has already been reported in the *Labour Organiser*.

During the past year, our Social Committee has also done a big job, bringing members of the Ward together on social occasions as often as possible and also giving their children a treat at holiday times.

We believe that it is not enough just to call on members for their subscriptions once a month or to expect them all at Ward meetings. Many just cannot attend in any case. We believe that the bringing together of ordinary people in a happy, comradely atmosphere, helps our cause, in its own way, equally as much as the political meeting.

Every week throughout the year we ran a whist drive which has had a faithful following. Once a month during the winter season we have held a Social and Dance, never attended by less than 150 people. Those members

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with young children brought them along, and they played in a special room. During the summer, five coach loads of members had a day at Margate, the first of our proposed annual outings. At intervals theatre trips to the West End were also organised.

For the children—and this has been a tremendous job but immensely worth-while—we arranged an outing, a party, a trip to the circus, and a visit to a pantomime. 180 were taken by train in August to Chalkwell (near Southend) and really enjoyed themselves. At Christmas our numbers were so big that we decided to take those between six and fourteen to see a pantomime at the local "Palace" and those under six enjoyed themselves at a tea party, for which we hired a "puppet show." It will give you some idea of our job when I tell you that 230 children saw the pantomime and between 150-200 came to the party. In addition 60 lucky ones, "drawn out of the hat," were taken to Bertram Mills' Circus at Olympia.

Many anxious hours were spent organising these events, but we found it extremely enjoyable for it was all done with the spirit of comradeship that pervades our association. I wonder what value other ward associations attach to the social side of

their activities?

Tom Jenn

Tom Jenkinson, Social Secretary, 1948, Plashet Ward Association, East Ham North L.P.

#### Can You Beat This?

Only formed in June, 1948, Hertford Heath Labour Party has a membership of 93 out of a total electorate of 555. Regular public meetings are attended by audiences of 70 or more and their newly-formed youth club claims practically every boy and girl over 11 as members. The Party is putting up seven candidates for the Parish Council and a candidate for the one vacancy on the Rural District Council. Can any Party beat this record of six months' achievement?

## **Durham's Fight for Victory**

CONGRATULATIONS to Jo Foster on again producing as Secretary of Durham County Federation of Divisional Labour Parties a really excellent booklet for candidates, agents, secretaries, speakers and all other workers in this year's local election campaigns.

"Fight to Hold Power" is its challenging title and within its 75 pages is all the information upon local services that voters rightly expect from their candidates or canvassers. Health, education, social welfare, road works, fire service, are all explained in detail with local facts and figures and the percentage of revenue expenditure devoted to each item is closely analysed.

age of revenue expenditure devoted to each item is closely analysed.

"During the present year it is estimated that more than 19 million meals will be supplied to school children"...

"The County Council deals with the maintenance and improvement of 1,708 miles of road and 478 bridges at an

average cost over the past three years of £1,100,000"... "During the past three years our County Inspectors have found the following to be DEFICIENT in weight or measure: 13 parcels of butcher's meat, 115 sacks of coal, 218 bottles of milk, 657 loaves of bread, 2,100 parcels of food." And so on.

In addition, Mr. Foster has produced excellent notes on the duties of an election agent, on suggestions to canvassers ("Be methodical... Be polite... Don't argue... Please get on") and on the law relating to all types of local government elections.

In fact, the whole booklet forms an excellent supplement to the Speakers' Handbook issued by Headquarters on national issues and there can be little doubt that such a booklet on local affairs would be equally valuable in other areas.

## Small Man: Big World

New Labour Party Discussion Pamphlet

LATEST discussion pamphlet in the "Towards To-morrow" series is written by Michael Young, Secretary of the Labour Party Research Department, and deals with the vital need for improving human relations in big factories and nationalised industries.

tories and nationalised industries. "The Government," it states, "has created many of the institutions of the future socialist society. The next step—perhaps the main step for Labour's second five years—is for the people to run the new and the old institutions, participating at all levels as active members of an active democracy."

The six main points of the pamphlet

ire:-

(1) Perhaps the main step for Labour's second five years is to let the people themselves run the nation's social institutions, participating at all levels as active citizens in an active democracy, but on the model of the family.

(2) Wherever possible, without harming efficiency, the size of organisation should be reduced. In nationalised and private industries, managers in touch with the rank-and-file should be given full authority to take decisions about questions raised in consultation with the workers. Overlarge factories and other industrial undertakings should be divided up into smaller units.

(3) In local government, small neighbourhood councils similar to parish councils in the countryside should be formed within cities and towns

(4) Democracy can only flourish if there is the right kind of democratic leadership. Elected leaders should share power with the people, and give them the fullest information. In industries with annual targets of production the workers should help to fix targets for their own workplaces.

(5) Appointed leaders should be chosen from those who have skill in human relations. They should be

trained in applied psychology.

(6) The new social sciences of psychology and sociology are revealing the full strength of democracy, in theory and in practice. These sciences should get more support from the Government. They will help to synthesise Fabian Socialism and idealistic Socialism in a new society which is not only more efficient but in which the individual matters more. Britain will be a pioneer in the new frontiers of the human spirit.

The pamphlet is available from Labour Publications Department, Transport House, Smith Square, London, S.W.1. Prices, post free, one copy, 3d.; 12 copies, 1s. 6d.; 100 copies, 10s.

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